

close reasoning by which he conceived that he was irresistibly led to inevitable conclusions. The doctrines of Protestantism, and the conception of a new relation between Church and State, were not really the deductions of any cut-and-dried dialectic. The one important inclination that he derived from scholasticism was the tendency, shared with all mediaeval thinkers, to carry his theories to their furthest logical point. Hence he was rather a radical than a moderate reformer. This uncompromising attitude of mind assigned to him his true function. He was not the leader of a political party trying to carry through the modicum of reform practical at the moment, but a private individual trying to spread new ideas and to begin a movement of thought which should bear fruit in ages to come. His later writings show that he had ceased to regard himself as a * serious politician ;' perhaps he was dimly aware that he was something greater. He did well, both for himself and the world, to throw aside all hopes of immediate success and speak out the truth that was in him without counting the cost. But his greatest admirers must admit that in some cases his logic drove him to give unwise and impossible advice. Some will think his recommendation of complete disendowment and the voluntary system to be little better, and all will probably agree that his proposal to include the Universities in this scheme was unnecessary. But as they were then part of the Church, he did not see how it was consistent with his logic that they should continue to hold endowments of land and appropriated tithes.¹ In the same way, he carried to an equally extravagant length his theory that the life of the priest should be purely spiritual. To spiritualise the occupations of the clergy was a very desirable reform at this time, but there was no need that Wycliffe should therefore wish to restrict their studies to theology. His objection to the attendance of clergy at lectures on law and physical science was, beyond doubt, a step in the wrong direction.² He was confirmed in this error by his belief in the all-sufficiency of the Bible. ' This lore that Christ taught us is enough for this life/ he says, ¹ and other lore, and more, over this, would Christ that were

¹ Matt., 427 ; *X>e Off. Past.* » *De Ofrcio Regis*, ch. vii. 176-